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(2014)

[Guest editorial] Qualitative Research Journal special issue: Approaches to researching masculinities.

Qualitative Research Journal, Volume 14, Issue 1.

This file was downloaded from: <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/109292/>

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<https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-03-2014-0009>

In 1993 the journal *Theory and Society* published, within their 22nd volume, a special issue, Number 5: Masculinities. This publication constituted eight papers gleaned from two international conferences held in 1991, one in California and the other in Sydney, Australia. Both meetings discussed masculinities as an emerging “set of issues [...] (namely:) sexuality and its social meaning, systems of domination [...], construction and deconstruction of cultural representations of the masculine, men's material interests and the divisions among men” (Connell, 1993). Both conferences situated themselves as a response to the popularity of an essentialist men's movement that had peaked in momentum after the publication of Robert Bly (1990) *Iron John* a year earlier. This special issue Number 5: Masculinities presented a disparate collection of papers that sought to problematise masculinity as a field of academic interest and has become influential in later years as heralding a way forward.

R.W. Connell suggested, in the editorial of the 1993 issue, what was being presented was in fact a “meeting, where a number of projects illuminate(d) each other” (Connell, 1993). Twenty years later the Association of Qualitative Research in partnership with the *Qualitative Research Journal* has produced this special edition, *Approaches to Masculinities*. What follows are seven papers which delineate current approaches in the research of masculinity exploring new methods, theories, conceptual constructions and positions.

Raewyn Connell considers the fundamentals; why are we interested in studying masculinities. She argues that since gender remains one of the primary global social structures we continue to study masculinities because inequalities relating to gender are at the heart social justice. Connell suggests that we must seek to understand those issues and the different forms they take. We study masculinities because patterns of masculinity relate to an overall sense of well-being, therefore we are compelled to respond to these issues for the good of larger global concerns.

David Buchbinder uses the TV sitcom *Modern Family*, to investigate the ways in which the masculine post-9/11 is represented. The approach used is that of cultural studies, a field which draws together theorisation and analytical methods from a variety of disciplines. Buchbinder argues that this popular series continues to promote traditional notions of patriarchal power whilst also presenting alternate versions of masculinity suggesting other possibilities. He claims that an understanding of the dynamics of masculinity and alternative forms of masculinity is likely to have a material impact in the social sphere. By drawing together theory and analytical approaches from a variety of relevant disciplines, the paper demonstrates that, in the wake of the events of 9/11, there are twin impulses simultaneously to adhere to a familiar, dominant notion of masculinity, yet to propose alternate forms of the masculine.

Chris Brickell explores how scholarly disciplines are currently engaged in a turn to affect, paying close attention to emotion, feeling and sensation. His paper locates affect in relation to masculinity, time and space by suggesting that historically, in a range of settings, men have been connected to

one another and to women, and these affective linkages tell us much about the relational quality and texture of historically experienced masculinities. Brickell argues that spatial settings, in turn, facilitate, hinder and modify expressions and experiences of affect and social connectedness. He brings space and time into conversation with affect, using two examples from late nineteenth-century New Zealand, arguing if masculinities scholars often focus on what divides men from women and men from each other, we might think about how affect connects people.

Jodi Kaufmann offers here a cautionary tale. In previous research on male-to-female transsexuals, Kaufmann suggests her analysis was too knowing, detached, and full of authorial superiority. In other words, it was too masculine. In this paper Kaufmann brings to the fore the deleterious effects of a masculinist method. She then writes a palinode in order to allow masculinity and male to be performed and un/tethered differently by and on different bodies and different subjects, concluding with a discussion of how a masculinist method emerged and its consequences.

Jennifer Germon explores the benefits of developing new models and metaphors to account for sexual difference. She investigates areas of research that have revealed that the genes responsible for gonadal development have a simultaneous activation and deactivation effect. Germon explains how genes and gene products responsible for testes development say, coexist with those responsible for ovarian development and vice versa. She suggests that this dual action is now known to extend beyond the womb. She argues that these processes demonstrate that sexual difference far exceeds the explanatory power of the presence/absence and active/passive metaphors. It is clear that things are considerably more complex and nuanced.

Timothy Laurie brings together phenomenology and masculinity studies to explore quotidian distinctions between differently gendered ethical practices. While scholarship on masculinity has frequently focused on hegemonic modes of behaviour or normative gender relations, less attention has been paid to the “ethics of people I know” as informal political resources. Laurie's paper rethinks mundane social securities by drawing on both Martin Heidegger and Simone de Beauvoir, who in different ways recognise that the efficacy of social critique is circumscribed by one's commitments to the probable, the memorable and the familiar. In particular, this phenomenological approach invites a rethinking of gendered subjectivities, especially in psychoanalysis, from the viewpoint of memory, habitation and everyday attendance. Laurie suggests that an inquiry into diverse modes of quotidian complicities – or what de Beauvoir calls the “snares” of a deeply human liberty – can be useful for describing the mixtures of sympathy, empathy and disavowal in the performance of pro-feminist and queer-friendly masculinities or masculinist identities.

Finally in co-written paper Mark Vicars and I explore an autobiographic approach to telling stories of multigenerational masculine fractures that appear at the conjunction of gender and sexuality. Using Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming (other) personal narratives are presented as a way of experimenting with methods of enquiry that champion the richness found at the heart of storytelling.

The hidden labour of scholarship; writing, collecting, reviewing, revising, reworking and editing has occupied those working on this project for the last two years. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the authors that are represented here. Reflecting on the scholarship contained within this issue of QRJ I am struck by the disparate research modalities that are being employed to explore masculinities and the masculine. Collected here are papers which approach this area of gender studies from a seemingly disparate collection of academic disciplines; sociological, phenomenological, biological, political, philosophical and cultural perspectives. This assortment of perspectives highlights the integrative success and the plurality of endeavour which Connell dubbed in her 1993 editorial the “embryo [of an] academic discipline” (Connell, 1993). If we can realign, as we have done here, to focus further on broadening our reach, developing innovative research techniques we in turn might also release ourselves from the dogma of progression as an indicator of success. Instead we could consider these pioneering approaches as a form of expansion, an infiltration into tracks and traits of life. In this we simply illustrate how we are beginning to consider masculinities as a fundamental way in which we are learning to apprehend our globalised society.

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About the Guest Editor

Dr Ian Davis has taught in London, Sydney and is currently working with the Griffith Institute of Educational Research in Brisbane. He received his BA (Hons) from The Open University (UK); his MA from the Leiden University (The Netherlands) and his PhD at Griffith University (Australia). Ian's research focus is designed to bridge the disciplines of cultural studies, literary studies and educational research. Recent projects have investigated areas such as narrative inquiry, narratology, gender studies (specifically masculinities) and critical reflective practice. Ian has published on all of these subjects, and has just completed a book entitled *Stories of Men and Teaching* to be published by Springer in 2014